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The Early Stages of Historical Documentation and Modern Archives in Jerusalem Society at the End of the Ottoman Period

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1. Introduction

The period of Ottoman rule in Palestine, lasted for four hundred years, from 1517 until the British conquest of the country. "The Unchanging East" - reflected the position of traditional-conservative society and tinged somewhat with envy, towards the Europeanization of Palestine. Indeed, the popular picture of Palestine, and the whole of the Levant - as the unchanging east, backward and resting on its laurels, as described by many European visitors, was far removed from the truth as far as previous centuries were concerned, and just as removed from the truth in the 19th century. "The East" was changing steadily, in stages, and the image of Palestine at the end of the period, on the eve of WWI, was substantially different from its image at the turn of the century. Political and social reform was in the offing whose objective was centralized control and modernization of its administration while granting equal rights to non-Muslim minorities.¹

It should be noted that in 1800 and 1890, non-Muslim minorities (Christian, Jewish) made up 10.4% and 18.8% respectively of the total population of Palestine.² The country opened up to prolific and diversified political, economic and cultural activities on the part of the European powers as a result of the strengthening of their interests and desire to influence events in that part of the world. Crusaders, missionaries, holy men and even settlers arrived in Palestine, who developed a network of foreign institutions, such as churches, monasteries with hostels, schools, hospitals, businesses and financial enterprises. European powers, including England, Prussia, France, as well as the USA, Austria and Russia, opened up permanent consulates in Jerusalem, in Jaffa and in Haifa. The foreign consuls exerted a great influence, and acted as leaders for the minorities who benefited from the capitulations arrangement. The consuls maintained close ties with the churches and missionary institutions of their compatriots.³

Evidence of libraries and archives in Palestine in the second half of the 19th century can be found in the journals of tourists, pilgrims and explorers of Palestine. Modest collections of religious and legal books containing original works were found in the Muslim communities, in mosques and Muslim law courts. A number of large and valuable private collections existed in the homes of distinguished town-dwelling families. By comparison, the Christians

in Palestine established libraries: 1. in monasteries, in churches and missions; 2. in educational and research institutions whose objective was the study of the Holy Land; 3. in consulates. Monasteries and churches in Palestine maintained libraries that preceded all the other libraries. At the same time, these libraries should be viewed as archive collections and not as organized libraries for the benefit of subscribers. They contained mainly manuscript collections that were scattered among the monasteries and churches of the different sects. When we write modern archives in Jerusalem society, we mean that in multicultural communities in Jerusalem there were many generic archives which also existed as libraries, but only for inner needs.

The legacy of memory was archived by rolling the memory back and its presentation in a manuscript or antique document, which is different in history. Because of the contradictions that exist between memory and history, the combination of basic historical learning tools and the most symbolic objects of the memory: archives, libraries, museums and dictionaries, were like memorial ceremonies, festivals, eulogy deliveries, etc. Therefore, minorities gave these institutions a deep significance in cognition of the memory and preserved them zealously in locked shelters. Over time, collectors, learned men and monks came and devoted themselves to accumulating documentation, on the periphery of a society advancing without them and to a written history without their involvement. Later, the history of memory placed this treasure at the center of learned work and the result issued through society's channels of communication. The memory became an autonomous institution of archives, museums, libraries, caches, documentation centers and data banks. As the traditional memory fades away, a sense of obligation exists to the public of adherence to relics, evidence, documents, pictures, etc., that provide confirmatory signs of what happened in the past and as proof in an historical courthouse.

Within this process, an archive, visitors' center or museum was established by an individual or group of people whose objective was to perpetuate and preserve. The individual could well be one with initiative (a freak), totally dedicated to the establishment of the archive, exemplified by Jewish pioneers, Rivka and Alexander Aaronson who in the early twenties of the 20th century began to collect the voluminous material found in the Agricultural Experimental Station and literary vestiges of their brother the scientist Aaron Aaronson.⁴ The purpose in this article is to show the nature of historical activity regarding archival and library materials in Jerusalem at the end of the Ottoman period. Later, a number of examples were brought to the archives, where material was cataloged and dealt with according to modern authentication, at Christian and European religious and research institutions, as well as by the Arabic society of Jerusalem at the end of the Ottoman period.

2. Archives and libraries at Christian religious institutions

The advent of archives and libraries in churches and monasteries began with manuscript collections, archeological findings and Christian ritual objects. One of them was in Santa Katarina monastery in Sinai.⁵ As the main spiritual preoccupation of the monks was the study of holy writings and litany, a location for a library and archive was allocated in the monastery, containing ancient manuscripts and books, some of which were written or copied by the monks themselves. Manuscripts are considered by Christianity as holy treasures, to be preserved at all cost, and comes the time, a guarantee of salvation for all

those who have obeyed the commandments. Often, manuscripts were donated to a church or monastery, leading to the establishment of archives and libraries in monasteries. Monasteries that flourished under Christian rule in Palestine (Byzantine, Crusader) were renewed in the 19th century. It should be pointed out that the writings and books were intended for internal use in the monastery, and most outsiders visiting the monastery were denied access to the writings and books. In the 19th century with the restoration of the monasteries, the monks amassed in the monasteries manuscripts found in their immediate surroundings. The most richly endowed archives and libraries in Jerusalem were found in monasteries at the beginning of the 19th century. In the early 20th century, the number of collections and libraries in Jerusalem was reported to be increasing yearly.⁶ Examples of these collections in Jerusalem are given below:

2.1 The archive and library of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchy

Within the framework of renewal in the 19th century, the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchy decided, on the initiative of the Patriarch Nikodemus,⁷ the office holder at the time, to collect ancient manuscripts from a number of monasteries in Palestine and concentrate them in a single location. The task was given to the monks, such as the monks of Mar Saba monastery in the Judean Desert, who restored the theological library of the existing patriarchy in Jerusalem dating from the beginning of the 3rd century. This library, containing many manuscripts, referred to in ancient sources, served as a center of learning of major importance, patronized by the first ecclesiastical investigators, such as Osavius, Origanus and Hironymous. In 1800, most of the manuscripts in monasteries in Palestine were taken to Jerusalem.⁸ The person responsible for centralizing the various manuscripts was the Greek scholar Athanasios Papadopoulos Kerameus, who was invited, in 1883, to serve as secretary to the Patriarch Nikodemus.⁹

During a visit to the Mar Saba monastery in the Judean Desert in 1821, the German researcher, Johann Martin Augustine Scholz, discovered some 200 abandoned manuscripts in total disorder. In addition, manuscripts from the 8th and 9th centuries and many from the 12th and 13th centuries were found in a preserved condition. He himself marked them clandestinely sequentially in order to refer to them in his writings. Many of the manuscripts were theological essays or copies of Greek holy works, but there were also 20 Arabic manuscripts and 50 printed books.¹⁰ In 1837, 700 manuscripts were handed over to the Patriarchal library in Jerusalem.¹¹

This air of renewal awakened in the monasteries, that were mainly completely unoccupied or partially unoccupied by monks. Gradually, monks sent to Palestine together with the Crusaders restored the ancient monasteries in Ashkelon, Beit Govrin, Beit She'an, Mt. Tabor, Tiberias and in Gaza, as well as the refurbished church in Caesarea. At the same time, a monk at Beit Govrin collated ancient in-situ manuscripts, while in Caesarea, one of the monks gathered together heads of statues and coins. During this period, a seminary was established at the Monastery of the Cross headed by Father Kleophas who carried out research and published books on Christianity and the geography of Palestine. According to Scholz, the archive and library of the main Greek monastery were the largest in the city in his time. There he found 60 manuscripts and 500 books, most relating to theology, however, among the manuscripts he would come across musical subjects.¹²

The library contained manuscripts and books in Arabic, Syrian, Ethiopian, Slav and Greek, as well as books on geography. At the beginning of the 20th century, the librarian was Hippolyta Michailidis. A similar library, but larger than in Jerusalem, was that of the Greek Patriarchy in Cairo which contained mainly ancient manuscripts.¹³ A 1911 tourist guide mentions that most of the valuable books in the Church of the Cross were transferred in recent years to the great monastery within the city, and this library contains writings from the Mar Saba monastery.¹⁴

Other archives and libraries written about by Scholz were found in the chapel of Nicholas the Holy One (adjacent to the Patriarchy, today the museum of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchy), containing 180 volumes and miscellaneous manuscripts, and also at the Monastery of the Cross.¹⁵ In 1856, the monastery was converted into a theological school, and its interior underwent structural changes in order to meet its new requirements.¹⁶ Before changes were carried out, new wings were added, two stories with sumptuous chambers for receptions and ceremonies, an archive, and museum, as well as administrative offices for the school. Scholz discovered in this monastery 400 manuscripts from the Gregorian period, written in that language, and which the Greek monks were forbidden to peruse. The archive was also a preserve for 15 Syrian manuscripts, 10 Arabic manuscripts, 12 Armenian manuscripts, 14 Greek manuscripts, 4 Slavic manuscripts and printed books.¹⁷

Twenty years later, a researcher of the Sinai monastery library, Constantine von Tischendorf, who visited Palestine in 1844, reported that most of the Gregorian manuscripts were sold in Europe. He also discovered an additional archive in the Mar Elias monastery, concealed from tourists in a solitary tower next to the monastery, containing manuscripts of Greek, Russian, Wallachian (a region of Romania), Arabic and Syrian origin. He particularly made mention of ten beautiful Ethiopian manuscripts written on parchment. The monks told him that a member of the Russian church had compiled a complete list of manuscripts at the site. After some time, he heard that an additional collection of manuscripts had been discovered at the Mar Saba monastery, but did not have the time to peruse them.¹⁸

During the years following WWI, the Greek library in the Old City was opened, evidence of which can be found in a book by the Jewish geographer Yeshayahu Press, published in 1921, which mentions the library and collection of ancient Greek Orthodox manuscripts.

A number of years later, on the initiative of Greek Bishop Temotaus, the museum of the Patriarchy was officially established, containing the library and archive. The museum was inaugurated in 1922, and opened up to the public. The library and the museum are mentioned in the 1946 tourist guide, where it is written that the Greek Patriarchy maintains a library of ancient Greek manuscripts and a museum with collections of antiquities and paintings. Today, the library contains some 2,300 ancient manuscripts and some 10,000 antique books.¹⁹

2.2 The archive and library of the Armenian Patriarchy

The first we learn of the Armenian archive and library in Jerusalem was from the writings of the German researcher Titus Tobler, who was residing in Jerusalem at the beginning of the 19th century, and wrote of the existence of a library in the Armenian monastery, containing

an archive.²⁰ 'The American Eastern Society' report from 1860, states that Armenian manuscripts and artistic exhibits were on show at museums in Istanbul and Jerusalem, in private collections and in the royal library in Paris. At the same time, there was no clear distinction between the library and the archive on the one hand and the museum, and artistic exhibits and manuscripts preserved together.²¹

The founder of the library and archive, the Armenian patriarch Esayi Garabedian, was acting patriarch from 1864 to 1885.²² He initiated the establishment of the Armenian museum and library in 1854, while still a priest. Esayi was technically very versatile, which was put to effect in his work in the Armenian monastery in the years 1848-1851. Among other abilities, he was an expert calligrapher and engaged in gold plating of metals and zincography. He prepared the first catalog of the books and manuscripts in the Armenian library in Jerusalem. According to his listings, the library contained 1,004 volumes in 1857. This library began to expand from the middle of the 19th century following the persecution of the Armenian people by the ruling Ottomans. An operation was put in place to rescue manuscripts by transferring them to Jerusalem.

The establishment of the Armenian library and archive is linked to processes taking place in the Armenian Church during the time of Esayi, and even earlier in and away from Palestine. After Esayi was conferred with the Episcopalian appointment, at the behest of the Armenian center in Etchmiadyin, he spent time in Istanbul in order to solve, together with the Ottoman regime, urgent problems relating to the Armenian Church. The central committee of the Armenian community entrusted him with two objectives: to make a fixed payment totaling 120,000 piasters from the treasury of the Armenian Patriarch administration; to establish an advanced theological seminary, a modern printing press and museum-library, all in Jerusalem. The establishment of the seminary, printing press and library necessitated large sums of money. Esayi requested that at least one or even two of these projects enjoy unlimited funding. The central committee agreed and authorized him to arrange the appropriated budgeting.

On his arrival in Jerusalem, he adopted a liberal and progressive attitude towards the Patriarchy. He sent emissaries to different countries to raise funds for the projects of the Jerusalem community and carried out reforms in the local patriarchy. Because of these reforms, many changes were made to the seminary study program, for example; study of languages, music and painting in the curriculum. Esai and those that came after him, made every effort to ensure that the level of studies at the seminary was up to academic standards, in order to equip religious leaders with a broad education for service in the Armenian communities in Syria and Lebanon.²³

2.3 The manuscript archive of Father Antonin in the Russian Orthodox Church

Father Ivanovitch Kapustin (1817-1894), known by name and title as Archimadrite Antonin, conferred on him as a senior religious scholar in the Russian church, initiated the establishment of a manuscript collection in the Russian Orthodox Church in Jerusalem.²⁴ Father Antonin was a man of research and wrote extensively about Jerusalem and holy places in Palestine. He was active in excavations and the discovery of archeological remains in the framework of the scientific activities of the 'Parvoslavic Imperialist Society,' as well as

a member of the 'German Society for Exploration of Palestine' whose membership included non-Germans. Father Antonin headed the Russian mission delegation in Palestine and added to Russian real estate assets throughout Palestine, especially in Jerusalem. These assets included the present day 'Russian Compound,' and other locations on the Mount of Olives, in Ein Kerem and elsewhere. Whilst in Jerusalem, he engaged in archeological digs and exploration of Palestine. He travelled throughout the countries of the Middle East and went on archeological expeditions in Palestine and surrounding regions.²⁵

In 1870, Antonin travelled to the Sinai desert, residing at the Santa Katrina monastery for a period of two months. During his stay, he visited the library that contained a large number of manuscripts and cataloged the Greek manuscripts. A Greek translation of the 'Codex Sinaiticus' convocation was later transferred to the Hermitage Museum in Russia.²⁶ Antonin made a practice of cataloging manuscripts in the monasteries that he visited, for example, he cataloged manuscripts in Greek monasteries.²⁷

During the eighties and nineties of the 19th century, brisk trading began of fragments from the 'Cairo Geniza' which found their way to capitals and cities in Europe, including Oxford, Budapest, Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Frankfurt am Main, Cambridge and Strasbourg. At the same time, Jerusalem also became a center for trading of Jewish manuscripts from the 'Cairo Geniza.' Father Antonin, who had settled in the city at the time, selected wisely the choice items from the Geniza fragments for his collection. It was possible that the selection was made by traders in Cairo, and Father Antonin only received selected fragments, as a result of which he himself travelled to Cairo.²⁸

Father Antonin received funds for land purchase, as well as assets from Russian donors. From some of the donors, he purchased ancient manuscripts, mainly of Greek origin, as well as fragments from the 'Cairo Geniza,' which he bequeathed to the public library in St. Petersburg. These manuscripts are preserved to the present day in a special collection named after Father Antonin in the Saltykov-Schedvin public library in St. Petersburg.²⁹ The collection of Cairo Geniza fragments includes 200,000 manuscripts, including the Antonin collection, relatively smaller than other Geniza collections, totaling 1,200 fragments. This collection is known to researchers and scholars of Jewish studies and some of the fragments have been published.³⁰

Within the framework of archives and libraries of monasteries in Jerusalem, we can include the St. Salvador monastery (Franciscan), the St. George cathedral and college (Anglican), the Dormation monastery (Benedictine), the Ratisbonne monastery (Catholic), St. Etienne (Dominican) and St. Paul hospice (Catholic), Santa Anna (Melkite), the "Soeurs de Sion" site (Catholic), the St. Mark monastery (Syrian) and Dir el Sultan (Ethiopian).³¹

2.4 Archives and libraries in European research institutes

Much has been written about the activities of foreign, non-Jewish researchers and institutes that were active during the period of Ottoman rule, researching Palestine in the 19th century.³² A number of these European research institutes, discernable by their activities that bore not only a scientific and historical research character, as during the mandate, but also included western institutions and researchers, mostly Christian, in an eastern Moslem

country. The European powers and Christian churches supported the activities of researchers and at times exploited these activities for their own political and religious interests. These research institutions maintained archives and libraries mainly for the purposes of interested researchers. A few examples in Jerusalem are given below:

2.5 The library of the Jerusalem Literary Society

On November 20 1849, James Finn established the 'Jerusalem Literary Society'.³³ The Protestant society members engaged in scientific research of the history, coins, manuscripts, statistics, commerce, economics, agriculture, customs and languages of Palestine. The society even established an experimental botanical garden, museum and library containing ancient manuscripts. 'The Jerusalem Literary Society' was one of the independent Protestant institutions in Jerusalem, with specific objectives and program. The society's objectives were to address literary and scientific issues relating to Palestine, as well as to encourage studies of other subject matter. The main objective of the 'Society' was to engage in subjects related to holy writings and to publish a selection of pages to be read at weekly meetings.³⁴

In the fall of 1849, a group of seven was formed in the home of Consul Finn in Jerusalem, six of whom were Englishmen resident in the city, including a one missionary. In the course of time, additional members joined the society. A detailed account of the beginnings of 'The Jerusalem Literary Society' and the establishment of the library appears in the book of reminiscences of the British Consul's wife, Elizabeth Anne Finn (1825-1921)³⁵:

'In November 1849, when Mr. Finn returned from a trip up north, we founded 'The Jerusalem Literary Society.' Four men and three women attended the first meeting. Subjects touched upon covered the study of all subjects relating to the Holy Land, including antiquities, natural history and investigation of different subject matter. The only subject not investigated was the issue of religious schism. ... We were well satisfied when we arrived at the structure for the "Society," being the structure of "The Society for the Exploration of Palestine." We established a library containing thousands of volumes and a small but very important museum... in January and February 1851 ... one day, a batch of crates full of books for the "Society's" library arrived from England.³⁶

Apart from the lectures and weekly meetings at the British consulate, the library-archive was established, containing ancient manuscripts.³⁷ The library, museum, experimental botanical garden and sun clock, were established relatively quickly and completed within six months.³⁸

Finn mentions that one or two volumes of ancient Samaritan manuscripts were donated to the library, and members of 'The Jerusalem Literary Society' sent other manuscripts to the British Museum. The library included a department for manuscripts and books written in Asian languages.³⁹

The Baedeker guide of 1876 makes mention of the library of 'The Jerusalem Literary Society' under the patronage of the Prince of Wales and the residing British consul in Jerusalem, as well as its opening times.⁴⁰

2.6 The Prussian Consulate Library

The Prussian consulate maintained its own library that was linked briefly to 'The Jerusalem Literary Society.' The library was established during the tenure of the German consuls in Jerusalem, Ernst Gustav Schultz and Georeg Rosen.⁴¹

The Prussian Consulate Library, containing manuscripts, rare books and historical documents, was established in 1847. Schultz, who carried out a preliminary survey of libraries in Jerusalem, concluded that the library objective should be that manuscripts and documents purchased be made available to European researchers for their investigations, as well as to make copies of manuscripts and documents for libraries in Prussia. Schultz wrote a detailed proposal of his program that was submitted to Prussian governmental offices and the advisors of King Frederick Wilhelm IV. A ministerial directive of the Prussian Minister of Education dated March 10 1847 called for the setting up of a library, to be named (The Royal Jerusalem Library), its location and budget for a base collection. Links were established with the Royal Library in Berlin and information exchanged relating to important manuscripts and rare books. University libraries in Prussia were requested to transfer copies to the library in Jerusalem. Schultz was also requested to offer these libraries purchasable manuscripts. The library was maintained within the consular framework until 1904.

The library provided a service to researchers, tourists and members of the local evangelical church, those active in the Prussian Mission and pupils attending the mission school. Towards the end of the 19th century, the library was hardly being used. The library was planned and designed in the best tradition of German academic libraries and was the very first research library in Palestine. Because of its activities, for the first time, books for research were brought to Palestine from Europe, whilst on the other hand, manuscripts and books from local collections found their way to libraries in Germany.⁴²

2.7 Archives in the Arabic-Moslem society

We are not party to information about libraries in Arab society in the 19th century, but doubtless, Moslem sites and mosques housed limited collections of religious works, containing manuscripts and printed books. Likewise, privately owned libraries existed, the most famous being the library of Rajib Haladi in Jerusalem, containing more than five thousand Arabic manuscripts and almost the same number of volumes in Arabic, Parsee, Turkish, French and English. Some of these were original works from the Mamaluke period. The collection was opened to the public as the El Halidia Library at the outset of the 20th century.⁴³

3. Conclusion

Within the framework of the renewal and awareness of the past prevalent in Jerusalem in the 19th century, attention was given to preserving the assets of the church and its treasures, especially its ancient manuscripts and books. For the first time attention was given to the importance of preserving and cataloging ancient manuscripts in archives and libraries. This was complemented by a cultural flowering and granting of rights to Christian sects in the

city by the Ottoman regime that heralded reorganization of religious institutions, as well as erection of new buildings and restoration of existing buildings. Reorganization, particularly the Greek orthodox and Armenian patriarchy, paved the way for new buildings for the preservation of church treasures, including manuscripts that were scattered among various monasteries in Palestine.

The preservation of the past and historical documentation of Palestine played a part in the infiltration of the Ottoman Empire by European powers, thus scientific activities and ecclesiastical activities acted in unison. Similar to the preservation of antiquities in museums and private collections, monks, holy men and researchers also collected manuscripts in libraries and archives, cataloging them and caring for their preservation. Previously, these manuscripts and books in some locations were not preserved; some were thrown into storerooms, and in certain cases were used for combustion purposes and destroyed.

Those with initiative and the ability to perform, for example, the patriarchs Nikodemus and Esayee, Father Antonin, the consuls Finn and Schultz and others, were able under these conditions to act and focus their attention on preservation and to persuade, and at times, even to carry with them the leaders and society at large towards their goal.

Research bodies and foreign consulates, established in the first half of the 19th century, acted side by side with the churches and monasteries. Their activities bore a scientific character, combining biblical research, the land and material civilization, as well as leisure activities of the European community in Jerusalem and social entertainment for Europeans in the city. The changes brought about by the European factions in Jerusalem at the 19th century, included established of modern archives, even influenced at a later stage local society, both Moslems and Jews, at the 20th century.

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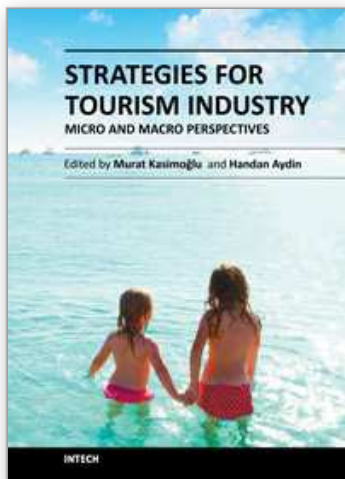
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- [41] Ernst Gustav Schultz (1811-1851) was an Orient Researcher in Königsberg University and was the first Prussian Consul in Jerusalem in 1842-1851. Georeg Rosen (1820-1891), born in Germany and was the Prussian Consul in Jerusalem in 1852-1867. He wrote a book of this time: *Oriental Memoris of a German Diplomat*, London 1930. Tobler, Titus, *Denkbätter aus Jerusalem*, 468.

[42] Schidorsky, “Libraries in Late Ottoman Palestine between the Orient and the Occident”, *Libraries and Culture*, 266-268.

[43] Ibid, 263.

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Today, it is considered good business practice for tourism industries to support their micro and macro environment by means of strategic perspectives. This is necessary because we cannot contemplate companies existing without their environment. If companies do not involve themselves in such undertakings, they are in danger of isolating themselves from the shareholder. That, in turn, creates a problem for mobilizing new ideas and receiving feedback from their environment. In this respect, the contributions of academics from international level together with the private sector and business managers are eagerly awaited on topics and sub-topics within Strategies for Tourism Industry - Micro and Macro Perspectives.

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